



Staff Report for Council Meeting

Date of Meeting: November 24, 2021

Report Number: SRCFS.21.060

Department: Corporate and Financial Services

Division: Strategic Communications

Subject: **SRCFS.21.060 – Report Back on Advertising in Ethnic Media**

Purpose:

To report back on alternatives to advertise City events and services in ethnic media, as recommended by the Budget Committee of the Whole on January 29, 2020 and approved by Council on February 12, 2020.

Recommendation(s):

That Council receive the report SRCFS.21.060 – Report Back on Advertising in Ethnic Media for information purposes.

Contact Person:

Kathleen Graver, Manager, Strategic Communications

Report Approval:

Submitted by: Sherry Adams, Commissioner of Corporate and Financial Services

Approved by: Mary-Anne Dempster, City Manager

All reports are electronically reviewed and/or approved by the Division Director, Treasurer (as required), City Solicitor (as required), Commissioner, and City Manager. Details of the reports approval are attached.

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Background:

In 2020, Council approved changes to the manner in which the City provides public notices and advertises services and events, including a corresponding reduction in the Office of the Clerk's Operating Budget for advertising expenses. In addition, Council requested a report back from staff on alternatives to advertise City events and services in ethnic media. As paid advertising is only one of many tools available to promote City activities, this report provides a broader summary of key ongoing and new communications initiatives supporting increased resident awareness of City events and services for populations whose preferred language is not English.

As per the request, the scope of this report only includes awareness and promotion activities for non-English outreach and awareness, undertaken by the City. It does not include programming (e.g. library, recreation and culture, etc.) or engagement activities (e.g. surveys, open houses, etc.) organized by departments throughout the City to connect with various audiences. It is also not an exhaustive list of all communications channels or efforts used by the City, where only the English language is available. As well, it does not address additional communication efforts undertaken by individual Members of Council.

Demographics

Note: Updated demographic information is expected to be released by Statistics Canada in 2022, following the most recent census completed this year.

As part of the Census of Population, Statistics Canada calculates the number of residents who identify as having a basic understanding of one, both, or neither of the two official languages (English/French). According to the 2016 Census, English remains the dominant official language in Richmond Hill, with 93.9 per cent of residents having an understanding of English. This has decreased slightly (94.9 per cent in 2006) but remains relatively stable.

The proportion of Richmond Hill residents who do not understand either English or French, as of 2016, is at 6.1 per cent, an increase from 2011 (5.1 per cent). While the proportion of Richmond Hill residents who do not understand English or French is low, it is one of the highest among Toronto census area municipalities. The proportion of those over the age of 65 who speak an official language as their first/primary language is 77.1 per cent, while the proportion for those aged 0-64 years is 96.8 per cent.

According to Statistics Canada, mother tongue is the language first learned at home by the respondent, and still spoken by the respondent at home. As of 2016, English continued to be the most common mother tongue spoken in Richmond Hill, with 36.3 per cent of residents identifying their mother tongue as English. This figure has been declining, from 50.2 per cent in 2001, to 44.9 per cent in 2006 and 42.1 per cent in 2011.

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Chinese (including Cantonese, Mandarin, and other Chinese dialects) is the next most common mother tongue, spoken by 24 per cent of residents at home. Persian/Farsi is one of the fastest growing mother tongues in Richmond Hill, growing to 9.8 per cent in 2016, up from 8.8 per cent in 2011, 6.9 per cent in 2006 and 3.5 per cent in 2001.

According to 2020 Environics Prism Research Data, top languages spoken at home in Richmond Hill are English (51 per cent), Mandarin (9.4 per cent), Cantonese (9.1 per cent), Persian (7.3 per cent) and Russian (3.4 per cent).

Current Initiatives

The City currently employs a number of approaches, tools and communications channels to reach audiences whose preferred language is not English. Note there is no “one-size-fits-all” approach to communications. For each City service, event or initiative, an evaluation is undertaken to ensure the communications approach is tailored, strategic and cost-effective for the audience and the desired results. In addition, the City continues to research and evaluate new tools and channels that can be used to reach additional multilingual audiences.

Note: The City uses a professional service vendor to provide translation and proofreading of translated material wherever possible. As such, there are costs and timeline implications associated with multilingual activities. The City is not staffed to provide in-house translation or proofreading service.

The following is a list of both earned and paid opportunities the City uses to raise awareness in non-English languages:

- **Media relations** – City media products (e.g. releases, public service announcements, statements) are provided to 20 non-English media outlets who are likely to reach a portion of the Richmond Hill population. In addition, some English media outlets, including York Region Media Group, offer translation of select digital articles for its readers.

As of October 31, 2021, the City has published 80 media products this year, covering Council decisions, City services, event announcements and community-building stories. The City has seen success for these efforts, with stories being picked up for non-English print and digital publication, particularly community-based stories of interest to broad populations (e.g., 6 Unique Park Features to Explore, Yonge North Subway Extension, Canada Day celebration, COVID re-opening plan).

- **Community partnerships** – The City is piloting a new initiative to partner with local community associations supporting newcomers and diverse populations to distribute a quarterly Q&A, translated into four non-English languages in Richmond Hill, based on top seasonal resident inquiries to Access Richmond Hill.

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- **Language Line** – Whenever possible and appropriate, the City promotes, in the top four non-English languages in Richmond Hill, the availability of Language Line services. This may appear, for example, in print advertisements and on the print community household newsletter. In addition, the City recently developed a one-page support document which can be included as appropriate with important notices from the City, indicating in 12 languages (based on Census data) the information is important and residents can get the information in their preferred language by calling Access Richmond Hill.

While the COVID-19 pandemic restricted in-person events over 2020-2021, when such events resume, the City has a booth to promote activities and answer questions. This community booth also provides the opportunity to promote the availability of Language Line.

Language Line has approximately 240 languages available, though the City receives calls primarily in Mandarin, Farsi and Cantonese. In 2020, Language Line served 93 callers. So far, in 2021, Language Line has served 125 callers (as of September 30). For context, Access Richmond Hill handled 84,500 total inquiries in that time period.

- **Print advertising** – While Richmond Hill does not have non-English media outlets dedicated solely to the community, the City can purchase print ad placement in publications known to reach a portion of our population (e.g. Ming Pao, Sing Tao, Nasha Canada, Chinese Canadian Times, Korea Times). These ads are translated into the language of the publication. Examples include, but are not limited to, the Official Plan Update, COVID-19 information, Age-Friendly Communities engagement, Council Strategic Priorities Survey and the School Board Trustee By-election.

A 2019 survey showed only 16 per cent of respondents indicated newspapers were their preferred method of communication from the City. While it was higher in the 55+ age group, further research in 2021 showed the demographic notably preferred reading articles over seeing ads, confirming the importance of the City's enhanced media relations efforts referenced above.

- **Radio advertising** – The City occasionally uses radio advertising spots as a supplementary tool to promote major initiatives in additional languages. For example, translated radio spots were used during Mandarin, Cantonese and Farsi programming slots on 105.9 The Region to raise awareness of the tax and water bill relief decision in 2020 and encourage engagement in Council's strategic plan survey. Other multilingual radio outlets we consider include Fairchild Radio AM1430 and A1 Chinese Radio AM1540.
- **Digital advertising** – The City has increased its digital advertising over the past year and a half, as it allows behavioural, demographic and language targeting,

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provides more measurable results than traditional advertising and can be less costly than print. Ads can be translated into multiple languages and delivered to a specific geographic area to those who have their browsers set to that language or to those who view news and other content in that language. Animated digital display ads, such as those used in the Welcome Back re-opening campaign, also allow the content to rotate between English and a non-English language. Some non-English media outlets (e.g. Salam Toronto News, Super Life) are online-only, requiring digital ads to reach that readership audience.

Social media channels are not used for multilingual organic content as the back and forth translation within the platform can result in errors. As well, social media is a two-way engagement tool and City staff are not able to respond quickly to comments and questions on a post in non-English languages. However, the City is exploring new opportunities to test the value of advertising on social media channels, including those otherwise unavailable to us such as WeChat, through multilingual media outlets (e.g. Sing Tao, Chinese Canadian Times, Fairchild Radio).

- **Owned digital channels** – The City’s website, RichmondHill.ca, includes an embedded Google Translate function allowing users to select to view web content in various languages. The City’s e-newsletter, MyRichmondHill News, also includes the capability to be translated using an automated tool or to be received in a different language based on the individual’s browser language setting. While this does not provide professional translation quality, it does provide users with a quick and easy option to understand general information.
- **Community print newsletter** – In Fall 2020, the City introduced a new owned communication channel – a community print newsletter delivered to all Richmond Hill households twice annually. The publication contains information about key City activities, events, public engagements, announcements, helpful tips and more. It has been well received by the community and won an international marketing award in 2021. In Fall 2021, the City will begin offering this publication in four alternative languages, upon request.
- **Print collateral** – Following the City’s Translation and Interpretation Policy, print material that concerns health and safety of the community (e.g., fire safety brochure) or that requires compliance and participation by the majority of the community in response to new or changing City initiatives (e.g., waste collection changes), will be translated.

Additional Considerations

- In 2022, following the release of updated Census data, and in the context of the City’s diversity and inclusion efforts, the City plans to review its Translation and Interpretation Policy to adjust as needed for top languages as well as to update for

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changes and trends in information delivery (e.g. digital over print, Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities requirements).

- A general analysis of advertising spends for promotional purposes (e.g. not including statutory public notices) shows the City's paid advertising is currently split at a ratio of approximately 85 per cent English and 15 per cent non-English.
- The City's efforts to increase multilingual information offerings reinforces the importance of writing base content as clearly and simply as possible to facilitate translations and to use icons and imageries that can cross cultural boundaries and convey messaging without the need of heavy text.

Financial/Staffing/Other Implications:

All efforts outlined in this report are covered within existing budgets and staffing complements.

Relationship to Council's Strategic Priorities 2020-2022:

Communications initiatives to reach multilingual populations support the strategic priority of Strong Sense of Belonging.

Climate Change Considerations:

Climate change considerations are not applicable to this staff report.

Conclusion:

The City continues to make efforts to increase multilingual information and promotional outreach to residents, within its current operational budget and staffing allotment, to reach new audiences, raise greater awareness of City activities, and help meet the needs of our community.

Attachments:

- Attachment A: Extract from January 28, 2020 Budget Committee of the Whole Meeting regarding Staff Report SRCFS.19.052

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Report Approval Details

Document Title:	SRCFS.21.060 – Report Back on Advertising in Ethnic Media.docx
Attachments:	- BCW012820.doc
Final Approval Date:	Nov 15, 2021

This report and all of its attachments were approved and signed as outlined below:

Sherry Adams - Nov 12, 2021 - 3:11 PM

MaryAnne Dempster - Nov 15, 2021 - 9:49 AM